Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Business Administration

Interview Transcriptions

The Impact of leadership styles on organizational performance: Transformational Leadership

Bekzat Karimullin

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Transcript Employee 1

Age: 25

Gender: Female

Level of education: Master's degree

Job position: UX designer

Duration: 2 years

00:02:25 Bekzat

The first question. Did your leader provide you with any opportunities for learning and development at your workplace?

00:02:43 Employee 1

So it depends on I think of my preferences so. I really like to go to workshops and some game events here in Prague. So now my leader can provide me some free tickets to such events, so I'm really appreciate it. So I've talked more about like. Provided opportunities for learning development? So yes, there are a big platform for only our team. There are lots of materials and resources from… our previous colleagues information and like video tutorials how to do our UX work better. So yeah, this is like a big platform with resources from diverse areas. For example, from 3D motion to UX design. So the this platform has lots of topics and like lessons of. If you know Coursera, it's like the same. But it's like a platform only for us [team]. So yeah, and I really appreciate it as well. But also LinkedIn has learning [courses] for employers, so if you have time you can get some lesson from LinkedIn. So and after that just assign it to your LinkedIn profile. So it's really great, because if you're not employed to a company which has, you know, some assignments with LinkedIn, you don't get this [lessons]…
I think this opportunity was really powerful and insightful for me, because lots of lessons which I can, I got on Coursera. I can use [platform] only for seven days. After that I don't like to pay. I try to accomplish all lessons during… seven days.
So and like here I have a [another] platform. Just freedom for me.

So I think, yeah. Last lastly, I would say that. Anyone from our team need to get feedback from team. I think it's what can improve skills. Not [only] soft skills but also hard skills. To become a better professional and like a specialist. So in this case we need to like collaborate with team to get appropriate feedback as well. So I think feedback is also means huge personal and like career development at workplace.

00:06:43 Bekzat

I see. Thank you. Can you do a little bit more about the feedback from your leader? How do you receive feedback from your leader?

00:06:54 Employee 1

Honestly, in such big companies, [leader] arrange a meeting which [company] call 'one to one'. There you can discuss any problems or how you can get better your work environment. So yeah, just get a feedback from your leader… like a survey. So and after that, my team accomplished that [survey]… After, leader gathered all this information and provide us with anonymous, general feedback…

00:08:01 Bekzat

Thank you. Can you think about an example when your leader gives you feedback and it impacts your performance or helped with education, let's say with learning something?

00:08:25 Employee 1

… Any feedback as always can be useful, and it's insightful for you because sometimes we can see some subjective perspective. So you need to like [to look] high above of these problems and see [issue]. So I think in this case your manager helps you.

00:09:09 Bekzat
Does your leader encourage a group work?

00:09:24 Employee 1

… Every spring we have a retrospective so we [team] can discuss what was good, what was not good, what we need to improve. And I think in this case it looks like… a team building, so we gather it all… and discuss at free format what we can improve and without arguing. Just friendly feedback from team. So yeah, I think it's really helpful from project manager site to organize such meeting.

00:10:19 Bekzat

Thank you. The next question, what specific actions or behavior from your leader contribute to a positive work environment for you?

00:10:54 Employee 1

I think we have so from one hand we have flexible work life balance… So if you'd like to go to office just come and work at office with your teammates. But if you don't like [office], just be at home. It was really cool… only because of COVID. But now if you need to collaborate closely and more time, so you need to go to office so. But I know I think that flexibility, it's really cool. I really appreciate it. But on the other hand, I think that there is no career development. So l for such ambitious person like me... I'd like to get new skills, to get a really cool project which I

could [include] at my portfolio. I always think about future. So, I need to know that in the future… I could be really impactful and like a powerful specialist at the market. So… didn't see it here [in company]. So that's why I purposely [begin] looking for a new job.

00:13:15 Bekzat

Can you consider an example when your leader supported you at work?

00:13:28 Employee 1

So very good question. Our team was organized really fast and there was a problem with on-boarding. No, there was no onboarding. Yeah, it was hard for me to, like understand everything after I came to work [for the first time]. Also my team worked remotely… my team consists of 10 people. So, but when I come to office, I can see only two persons from my team and. So it's only like Q&A, so there's no like some information which I could discuss with them. I think it was really difficult. My leader said [during] 'one to one': ' time by time your team must relocate to Prague. So, in this case we can communicate offline.' So like for more friendly and faster iteration process. Because it what we need to hear because for designing and releasing features faster we need to collaborate… We can accomplish only if we [team] can work together as a team offline with boards, markers in one room. After his [leader's] supporting I [felt] refreshment and fulfillment of a dream that it could be true. So we can work together.

00:16:40 Bekzat

Next question, apart from job contract rewards, so basically salary. What other form of motivation do you receive from your leader?

00:16:53 Employee 1

My motivations at work it 's not only like getting money but also it's interesting project. So if I had not interesting and inside field project, [helpful] for my experience and my skills, I didn't see in this work and collaboration impact on my future. So I I'm not interested in this… I need just struggle to accomplish task. It's like 'please give me a really cool project please. I'd like to be a part of something bigger.'…
For example, you need to accomplish really big task with how to build a big event. In that case we [team] need to build user flows, user persona, UX research. So, this was a really interesting part for me. And when I don't work with this part, I'm a bit frustrated about that. So, I need more challenging tasks.

00:18:58 Bekzat

How does your leader consider your personal needs in your workplace, for example, impactful projects or some challenging tasks as you said?

00:19:12 Employee 1

It's a problem for our team. So I could say nothing for all that doesn't work for us. I don't like to be negative, but they're only like a promise from their [managers] side... [and don't do promises] so after some time I wouldn't trust [managers] at all. Also from the team when we talk about something, it must be very helpful after our retrospective. But we don't do that. So and I'm a bit frustrating about it. Also, I think... we need not only talk about that but to do something as well. And I think it's a big role of project manager to provide this [make solutions]... They hear it, but [don't do it], maybe for other people it works.

I know like this works for other people... they like chill. They just earn money... But for such people as me it's not only what I need in this life.

00:21:30 Bekzat

Great. Thank you. What specific qualities or behavior do you admire from your leader as a role model?

00:21:41 Employee 1

I really appreciate the responsibility like leader. They needs to lead a lot of people. So there's not only me, it's a lot of us in. They [leaders] need to talk with all of us, you know, like, listen for problems, solve self-troubles like that. That's what really appreciate and admire and our leader...

00:23:00 Bekzat

OK. Thank you.

00:23:12 Bekzat

Yeah. Can you tell a little bit more about your company just briefly, where did you work? Where did you have this experience?

00:23:25 Employee 1

Nisa. It's a product company like startup. So yeah, they created a gaming platform from B2C. From PC site for matchmaking and connection Pro players with games as LOL and Dota 2.

Transcript Employee 2

Age: 24

Gender: male

education level: Bachelors' degree (on going masters).

Job position: intern in the statutory compliance department

Duration: 1 year, 1month.

00:01:37 Bekzat

The first question. Did your leader provide you with any opportunities for learning and development at your workplace?

00:01:50 Employee 2

Our company has an internal knowledge system. So like a lot of the basic things, well, not just basics like even some more complex things, it can be learned internally through the companies on knowledge management system. And if I had any doubts regarding my work, I could always go to my boss and he would set an appointment. Well, if he [leader] couldn't explain it to me like straight away, then he would set an appointment and for sure he would explain to me what I asked.

00:02:37 Bekzat

Nice. Does it affect on your performance after such sessions with your leader?

00:02:46 Employee 2

Yes, for sure, for sure.

00:02:51 Bekzat

Nice. Thank you. Next question, what specific actions or behavior from your leader contribute to your positive work environment for you?

00:03:02 Employee 2

Now the thing is I started working this job in my final years of my bachelors. So I worked on this job when I was doing my final bachelor's thesis. I was doing this job during my exams. But I've been doing this job through two exam periods like the exam, the final exams of my bachelors and the the exams. The first semester of my masters now, what was really like a positive aspect about

my boss was the fact that he was very understanding. Once again, I must explain to you that the way that our company operates is a bit different from most companies of that size and that scale, because this is a this is a big multinational corporation.

But long story short, at least in Prague, at least for our specific department, if people want, they can do this job completely remotely. So you know, like they don't expect you to come every day to the office. Sit for a few hours and you know like finish complete specific tasks they give you. A list of tasks they give you, they tell you by when it needs to be done [deadline] and that's it. So you can do this task during the morning, you can do this task at 2:00am in the morning. You could do these tasks in whatever time frame you could do, however you wanted them to be done.

And thing is like this level of flexibility really helps people. To complete their tasks with ease, but also it helps people to learn more things. Because since they have you know, a specific time period to complete your task and like no one is asking you to work on this task. At least one hour a day or something. You can find your own way to accomplish this task. And also since I have like a very packed timetable it was very helpful when I could just tell my boss: 'OK for these two weeks I can't work' You know, like after that I'll come back and I'll be able to make up any lost hours [of work]. The company was very understanding regarding this.

00:05:39 Bekzat

Thank you. How does your leader encourage you to do tasks?

00:05:48 Employee 2

How? Well, honestly however I see fit in the sense that like as a worker. I had complete autonomy to finish my task in whatever way I saw fit.

00:06:10 Bekzat

Does your leader give you space during the decision making?

00:06:18 Employee 2

Yes, for sure for sure.

00:06:23 Bekzat

Thank you. OK. Can you consider an example when your leader supported you at work?

00:06:36 Employee 2

Well, perhaps the most recent example would be … as I mentioned like I've been in this company for like one year and one month. But my original contract was only for one year, so last year my boss, he came to me and he said OK hey, we are very happy. Like 'are happy with your work. We would like you to stay in the company' so you know, 'what do you think about this? So what do you say about us extending your contract for one more year now?' I made some demands to my boss saying that: 'so these are my demands. If you want me to stay in the company, these are

my demands.' In one of my demands was that I get a raise to my salary. No, I didn't specify like a certain amount, I didn't say that: 'my raise should be should go from X to Z'. Just said I want a raise. So the next thing that happened was that my boss said 'OK, I understand.' And he basically took care of this entire issue by himself in front of the HR. So he actually got me a really good raise because like my raise was basically I got a [salary] raise of 50%. So from 200 krons … right now I get paid 300 krons [per hour]. So this was like a very good raise. And basically this wouldn't have been possible if my boss didn't stand up for me.

00:08:32 Bekzat

Do you get some other opportunities from your leader except growing opportunities?

00:08:43 Employee 2

Well, like I think we kind of covered it before, but like I would. Say also like when it comes to acquiring new skills. Because you know, like as an intern, I am assigned certain tasks and these tasks… they [company] don't assign us tasks that require a lot of like complex calculations for example. But you know, I told my boss: 'Hey, I'm comfortable doing the work I'm doing right now, but I would really like to learn something more.' You know, 'these complex calculations that you do. I would like to learn what you do.' And so as soon as I told him about this the next week… me and my boss sat together for three hours, and he explained to me a lot of the calculations that he does. And basically. Now, thanks to his time and his effort, I'm able to do these tasks which I couldn't do before. So in a way, he's helping me grow my skills.

00:10:04 Bekzat

I see. Thank you. Can you tell me more about the feedback? How does your leader give you feedback?

00:10:14 Employee 2

Well, I would say like the feedback is very straightforward. If I make a mistake he says 'OK, you made a mistake.' If in a certain area, in a certain task. If I have not fulfilled my task. I have not fulfilled the set expectations, he says. 'OK, this is an issue, you weren't able to do this [task].' 'So this is something that you have to improve on.' So the feedback is rather straightforward.

00:10:51 Bekzat

Does it increase your performance after these feedbacks?

00:10:55 Employee 2

Yes, because I can't fix my mistake if I don't know what mistake I made.

00:11:02 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question, apart from job contract rewards like salary, what other forms of motivation do you receive from your leader?

00:11:14 Employee 2

Well, the thing is, I would say recognition for my work. Recognition for what I do and like recognition not only on a personal level, not only just my boss saying: 'hey good work [employee name].' But recognition in front of peers and even in the presence of external actors. So just for an example, you know as I mentioned before, like I've worked in the audit department of my company. When the audit for 2022 finished… In 2023, so last year in a mail to the head of controlling…. so basically like the head of our department for the entire company. The head of our department in the EU. In my department is the topmost position that you can reach within the EU. In this e-mail to this director, my boss he said: 'we were able to finish this task on time and everything went well. We were able to finish our expectations and we were able to surpass some of the expectations that we had.' And in part, this is also thanks to the work of the other people who were involved in this task. But he also mentioned me by name. And after all, I'm an intern. Like I've been in this company for less than one year. This is something that I really appreciate. Being recognized even in front of the top people in the company in the department.
Another example is that like when we finished one of the audits like basically it was the same thing. But like my boss also wrote an e-mail to PwC saying that: 'everything went well. Thank you for the cooperation. I would also thank my colleagues…' and he included my name too. Yeah.

00:13:38 Bekzat

Thank you. Does motivation impact on your performance?

00:13:46 Employee 2

Well yes.

Because The thing is like it does it like it does impact your performance. Because like after, after a certain time like you know, like there are certain things that people expect from you and you want to make sure that you fulfill their expectations.

00:14:11 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question, how does your leader consider and address your personal needs within the workplace?

00:14:22 Employee 2

Well, it's once again like it's very straightforward... If I have an exam, I say 'OK, I have an exam at so and so time, I'm sorry I'll not be able to work as much.' And he [leader] says 'you know what? No worries, you focus on your exam. We'll take care of it.' ... And to put it really straightforward. If I have any personal needs in the workplace, I say what I mean and I get a response [from leader]. Usually in my favor.

00:15:07 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question, what specific qualities and or behavior do you admire in your leader as a role model?

00:15:16 Employee 2

I would say the ability, the ability to understand the people who work for you. To understand their [employees] capability. But also understanding their weaknesses. So, in a way like what I think is good regarding my boss, is that like he loves you. If he trusts you, he will give you as much freedom as you need. Like he doesn't put, he doesn't enforce any restrictions. So, I can finish the job however I want. And I think I think in my opinion, like a good leader is not someone who controls everything that everyone does. A good leader is someone who recognizes the positive attributes of the people who work under him and to empower these positive attributes.

00:16:17 Bekzat

Thank you. Does your leader encourage teamwork in your workspace?

00:16:27 Employee 2

I mean, I would say I would say yes. But like it's done in a way like he doesn't force like he doesn't force teamwork upon you. Like he just gives you the option of teamwork. He [leader] doesn't say. 'OK, you can't do this. So you have to work with this person.' He says: 'OK, see if you can do this. But if you can't do this, nothing to worry about. You can ask so and so person, and you can collaborate, and you can do it together.'

00:16:59 Bekzat

I see. Thank you.

Transcript Employee 3

age: 22

gender: Male

education level: Bachelors (on going masters)

job position: HR internal.

Duration: 7 months

00:01:24 Bekzat

So the first question is, did you did your leader provide you any opportunities for learning and development at your workplace?

00:01:41 Employee 3

Well, I mean he provided me with ways how to develop myself. In an like in a work and outside of the work I've received. I've received some licenses. For example: Coursera that like the online platform for trainings and also in the work I am. I'm allowed to join, let's say higher leadership meetings. Work on a project that I like and where I would like to develop myself, stuff like that.

00:02:28 Bekzat

Nice. Can you share me what kind of development did you had?

00:02:38 Employee 3

For example, there was for example, a lot of development on project management. So, organizing events by myself. There has been an improvement on, let's say, the effective internal communication. That was definitely one thing then. Then there was a huge development on the HR processes as a whole. Like getting to know, getting to know what happens when and why. On the specifics the industry, you know like why we are doing this in that way when the other company is doing it differently.

00:03:27 Bekzat

I see. Nice. Thank you. How did it impact your performance?

00:03:33 Employee 3

I would say positively it makes me more engaged for the work. So I go to work. I like going to work. Let's say it like that. I like working. I like the team and I can do. I feel like I do more in that way than I would do if there weren't these opportunities.

00:04:02 Bekzat

I see. Thank you. The next question, what specific action or behavior from your leader contribute to a positive environment for you?

00:04:12 Employee 3

First of all, I would say it's, the lack of micro management, so that I have my own space. I can basically work without being like checked on all the time. So he gives me space. He [leader] is really supportive. Even, like, open to mistakes and, you know, learning from and yeah, he basically like lets me choose my own way of doing things and the things that I want to do. So like if I see a project that interests me, I can just go to him and say hey, like I would like to get involved in this and I can do that.

00:05:07 Bekzat

I see. Could you tell me more about the feedback from your leader?

00:05:14 Employee 3

Well, that's the one thing I feel we are like in a bit because the feedback's bit, let's say not that regular … Not deep [feedbacks], but it's rather informal. I would say the feedback sessions. It's not like you know that we have a set time in a calendar where there is a feedback. But it's usually, I don't know, it's some kind of event or like during some other meeting. Just like it's more continuous than like having specific time set for that it's usually more focused on positive things I would say with him… it's definitely focus on like providing me with some tips how to let's say improve my, I wouldn't really even say performance, but like make some tips for my future career let's say… Like you know, I feel like I think one thing that he told me is like: 'I think that you are communicating enough with like people outside of our department' You know, 'that [advice] will be like important if you want to move up in the in the hierarchy and stuff like that.'

00:06:46 Bekzat

I see. Thank you. Do you feel that care of your leader motivates you?

00:06:55 Employee 3

Definitely, definitely. I mean, he's really carrying. You can see that… he really like, wants the team to develop, wants the team to feel good. So, something that definitely helps. And I mean it's, let's say harder, you know, not to do the work.

Yeah, you just wanna do the work at that moment because, like, you want him to have it as easy with you as possible.

00:07:33 Bekzat

Nice. Thank you. The next question apart from job contract rewards like salary, what other forms of motivation do you receive from your leader?

00:07:43 Employee 3

I would say it's, like the most important one would be recognition. So I mean that when I do something and my job is being used [personally appreciated] or anything… then it's like my [personal] work and not just like we [as a team] did it or anything [like that].

And he also says like all the time, 'thank you' and 'this is a really good job', 'I love it' stuff like that. So that's definitely something that helps as you already mentioned before the possibility to like develop that's also a huge thing. I would say rewarded [appreciation] motivates me. And then there is then a chance to, you know, learn new things and connect with new people. Also like taking part in some events and the work, travel, and stuff like that.

00:08:51 Bekzat

Nice. Does your motivation affect to your job performance?

00:08:56 Employee 3

Definitely does.

00:08:59 Bekzat

Thank you. The next question. How does your leader consider and address your personal needs in workspace?

00:09:14 Employee 3

I mean, he does. He does address them. Definitely. We have, we have a little let's say issue with like working from home a lot [online working]. So, we [team] don't meet that often, which can cause some, let's say, some traction between [team members]. Like what would be ideal and the current situation.

But he takes everything into account and you can basically always see some improvement in that way. So it doesn't feel like you're just wasting your time, you know telling him [is helpful]. that's great. And yeah. I mean, I can't complain. Say it like that. There is definitely space for improvement, but it's not bad.

00:10:12 Bekzat

Hmm, I see. Could you give an example of how he solves the issues about attraction that you talked about?

00:10:23 Employee 3

Well, I mean for example, there was an issue last semester that I had school during one of our meetings. So he tried to like change he time of the meetings. It didn't work in every meeting. So then he just gave me some heads up [communicated] after the meeting, you know like: 'what happened? What's going on?' stuff like that.

00:10:53 Bekzat

OK. Thank you. The last question, what specific qualities or behavior do you admire in your leader as a role model?

00:11:02 Employee 3

Well, the first thing could definitely be like empathy and you know, and being so caring about the team. That I just that I can always feel that I can like rely on him [leader] and like when there is… a management meeting or anything. That he's gonna have our back as a team. Stuff like that. He's very open and honest. That's also great. He cares about the team engagement and maybe like the huge, the largest thing is that I feel like he cares more about the team development than about the actual the profits. Or you know about like completing the goals and stuff, like that. Which he cares about as well. Like, yeah, he definitely does [care]… I always feel like he takes the development [of a team], maybe even more seriously than [profits]

00:12:12 Bekzat

Thank you. Could you tell more about team engagement, how he engaged teamwork between people?

00:12:25 Employee 3

Well, the largest thing I think is that he's not really, you know, dividing the work or delegating the work between us [team]. But it's rather us who go to him and select the work. You know, so I mean when there is something I would like to do, you could just go to him, ask him. And then the engagements, you know like larger, larger from the beginning because I'm doing the stuff that interests me that I want to work on.

00:13:06 Bekzat

Thank you.

Transcript Employee 4

Age: 22
Gender: Female
Level of education: High School (on going bachelor's degree)
Position: Local Committee President
Duration of position: 2 months

00:00:12 Bekzat

So, the first question. Did your leader provide you with an opportunity for learning and development In your workspace?

00:00:40 Employee 4

Yes, yes, yes, we have EDU Sessions… We have like conferences. So yeah, we have opportunities for development.

00:00:59 Bekzat

Does it affect on your performance?

00:01:05 Employee 4

The opportunities. Not the performance specifically, it more is giving me motivation and helping me to keep my motivation because the I don't think the performance is directly connected to it. Because I would perform either way. It just is giving me more ways how to do it better or that if I feel not motivated and I just do the performance. Because I have to [work]. It gives me more purpose to why I'm doing it [work].

00:01:58 Bekzat

Does it increase your commitment for the organization?

…. [response wasn't recorded, but Employee 4 said 'yes']

00:02:09 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question. What specific action or behavior from your leader contribute to a positive environment for you?

00:02:29 Employee 4

That because she is my leader, she creates a space where I can discuss with her my issues that maybe I wouldn't discuss with my team. Or I can discuss it with her, when in another way. So like she provides me with opportunity to share my feelings. She creates environment where she listens and is not judging. Also that she's like…. Like that, I know that she will not say it to anyone because I can see that she doesn't say things from others that she's has integrity. Yeah. Like she's OK to explain it [solution] to me in a clear way. Like she is helping me to find my way. But if I struggle to find my way, she tells me like: 'OK, don't do this. Do it different way' or 'this is not but the best way to do it'

00:04:01 Bekzat

Does the leader during such spaces give you feedback?

00:04:29 Employee 4

Like it was, it doesn't happen often. It's more just few instances when we speak more on the personal level. When she tells me. 'Yeah, I noticed you do this. It's maybe not better. It's not. Maybe not the best and it should be different.' But on the work… it's not that much because she more creates opportunity for me to discover my own way. She's more coaching me.

00:05:13 Bekzat

OK. Thank you. Next question, apart from job contract rewards or any rewards from your like organization, do you receive other motivations from your leader?

00:05:29 Employee 4

No, she helps me find my own motivation.

00:05:35 Bekzat

Can you describe how?

00:05:39 Employee 4

Asking me questions. Specific ones that I can think about and I can discover my own way.

00:05:55 Bekzat

OK. Next question, how does your leader consider and address or personal needs in the workspace.

00:06:15 Employee 4

Like not specifically. Like we have one to one meetings. Where we like work on my personal development. And if I am struggling with something, I can just call her or text her and she always wants to like help me to work with it if I'm struggling with something or if I need some support.

00:06:58 Bekzat

Does it increase the performance?

00:07:00 Employee 4

No, it's not directed and it's not connected to the performance, but for my motivation and how I do the how I want to perform by myself? It's not directly connected to it, because the performance is on me and her support is not like... Bigger support from her [leader leads to] bigger performance [of the follower]. No, it's like she [leader] supports me and my performance is like this [hand gestures: up and down creating waves], depending on my motivation. With this leadership.

00:07:41 Bekzat

You said your performance can also depend on your motivation, right?

00:07:45 Employee 4

Yeah, but also other factors.

00:07:50 Bekzat

Could you describe what factors can affect to your motivation externally?

00:07:54 Employee 4

Discipline, like I perform even when I don't have motivation because I know it has to be done.

00:08:06 Bekzat

OK. Thank you. Next question. What specific qualities or behaviors do you admire in your leader as a role model?

00:08:20 Employee 4

Integrity, leading by example and trying to have positive approach. But not always like positive, positive approach like optimistic but she tries to see opportunities where other people see f*ck ups. Let's say.

00:09:00 Bekzat

OK. Thank you. That's all for the interview. Thanks for participating.

Transcript Manager 1

Age: 20

Gender: Male.

Education level: High School (on going bachelors).

Job position: Design manager of plant products.

Duration: 2 years.

00:01:01 Bekzat

Thank you. So now let's move on to the interview questions. The first question. Do you encourage teamwork and a sense of belonging among your employees?

00:01:15 Manager 1

About that, I actually do. I always think that the teamwork is a very important part of any companies or any team in order to finish some work in perfect or at least 80% of the work. Usually there are like often, there are some people agreeing that doing the work by your own is better, but at some level of point, when you reach the breakout point, you cannot do that [work alone] anymore where you have to be able to actually divide the work to your team member. And that's why I think like among working as a team, the ability to divide the work for our team member is also one of the very important skill in order to be able to do teamwork. That's why I really encourage teamwork.

00:02:22 Bekzat

That's great. As you said, ability to have a like teamwork is very important. Do you have some opportunities for your employee that you provide them to learn this skill?

00:02:37 Manager 1

I would usually say that leaders should learn them first, but the first factor that allows you to learn this skill is that empathize or sympathy. You should be the leader [who] should be able to understand the strengths and the weaknesses of the employees in order to know what they're good at. After knowing what their strengths and weaknesses is, we base on our logical base and then we divide the work suitable for them, and that is the point where you see not only the employees is more effective, but they also have more motivations for the work.

00:03:27 Bekzat

Do you have an example when you successfully divide the teamwork so performance increased in your team?

00:03:38 Manager 1

To be more specific, it was a time when I actually correct the mess in the team. So there was a team where they have the previous leader that was leading 4 persons. While the team was good individually, but it was not really effective. Because like there are worker that actually doing the job that they don't like at all or they don't have really motivations for it. But it's just that the leader under the considerations, he think that is how the divisions would be the best for him [leader]. So that he would do the best work. And he thinks that if he does the best work then it will be the best for the team. So when I took over the team, I had a look at it and then I just corrected. I spend days and maybe like one week to actually to see like what is the actual motivations and their strengths, their weaknesses. And then I just adjust their working descriptions, they adjust their jobs and it actually works. The sacrifice, like exchange for that, I actually did some work that I'm not really good at, but actually I was also able to divide the work into the rest of the team members as well, and I think that is the most efficient way in any kind of work that you should be able to do.

00:05:13 Bekzat

That's nice. So based on that, how do you make sure that the needs of each employee or team member is met?

00:05:23 Manager 1

This also depends on the level … Let's say the quantity, the quantity of employees that you have. For example, I would always prefer one team to have like less than five persons under a leader. In that way, the leader can work individually with the employees. For example, like once per month they can have a, let's say a survey or like a corner sessions where they can actually talk to each other to ask about like how they were doing and then they can. Give to the leader their opinions from that, the leader give the opinions to the HR team or someone whose responsibility to take responsibility for their employees happiness or the level of satisfactions. And then they adjust the work and then they give back to the leader. And from there they can manage your board can sit together to adjust the work of the employees. And of course, it still has to be depends on the level of the company as well.

00:06:35 Bekzat

Great. Thank you. Next question, do you have training programs, mentorship opportunities or other initiatives you implement to help your team to excel in their roles?

00:06:52 Manager 1

We do always have training programs for any like newbies or so-called new employees that even they don't have the experience. Yet they only require to know some really, really basic experience.

00:07:12 Bekzat

I see and what kind of skills or program do you include into that opportunities?

00:07:22 Manager 1

So let's say. Specifically, of course, my factory is about the furniture products, so we always have the training programs where we actually train our employees to know how to actually build to make a specific product. And after they finish and they can make the product at [employee] himself. We start to move on with giving them a second training program, which is like for example second product and minimum always employee needs to have three training programs. We make sure about that.

And we also revise the training knowledge that we gave them. Sometimes, let's say six months every time for six months. And then we will judge based on that we judge, we adjust the time for example like if three-year training program is too much for them. If two is too little or if four is enough for them, yeah, we're based on that.

00:08:29 Bekzat

Great. Amazing. Thank you. The next question: do you prioritize creating a positive work environment for your team?

00:08:43 Manager 1

Yes, I really do. I think in any kind of environment, positive is really important. You cannot go to work with a, let's say. In positive attitude or environment, because you literally will not have any motivations to work at all.

00:09:07 Bekzat

I see how does it increase performance of your employees? Do you have a specific example?

00:09:18 Manager 1

Oh, let's say. Let's take an example relevant to our study. We go to the university, we study the project that we can understand it. We have a positive connections between we and the teacher and our friends. We're going to be. We're going to feel really motivated to learn the subject. We love it, but if you go to a subject where you don't understand anything at all and you keep having a negative attitude with between you and your teachers and you suddenly you don't want to study those subjects at all, even though.

Even though if those subjects are equal or not, you will always have the same as work, you cannot be motivated at your environment working environment where you actually don't have any motivations at all.

00:10:17 Bekzat

I see. I see. Great. Next question. I'll say it's from traditional rewards like a contract rewards as money. Do you employ other motivational strategies to inspire and motivate your team?

00:10:38 Manager 1

For me, I think if reward in any kind is good because the employees, they should have reward for any good result that they bring to the company. But for me, I care about the future of employees more than the current benefit. In my perspective, any employees, any kind like 90% of them, they don't want to be employees forever at that one positions. They want to develop themselves, at least for that [reason of motivation]. Some of them may want to even like have bigger dreams after that, so I think, one of the responsibility of the manager or the boss is also to provide them opportunity to actually develop themselves, not only in the area of the job that they're doing, but also outside of that. And for the workers that I think they really want to develop, then they would see. They would visualize the reward as something that is that helps them to develop themselves more than just the currently work like money or any kind of that [job-contract rewards].

00:11:57 Bekzat

Do you have any specific example when you cared or promoted any opportunities for future growth of your employee?

00:12:07 Manager 1

So in our working place we have this kind of promoting support the for the employees. For group of employees where they actually have the one of the best products during a quarter or during like half of the year, then we would have this program to send them abroad to learn more about them, how to create a better product. It can be at China, it can be at Germany. Depends on the place, but there are always like it. And we also adjust like even more better opportunity for them to grow. Not only relevant about the making product itself, but also for example for the older employees we would have, we would provide them these some kind of like program where they can actually be able to manage the family financials better or anything like that. So we always try to provide the most relevant and the best opportunity for the employees so that they have the place to.

00:13:24 Bekzat

Amazing. I see this is a lot of benefits for employees. Yeah. Did you notice any difference in performance between employees who went with such benefits like abroad and the employees who didn't go?

00:13:28 Manager 1

That's true. Of course, there's a very big difference so. What I tried first is that I gave all of them [employees] first, one opportunity that they can interact with those kind of like going abroad opportunity or some kind of that. But in a minor scale. They felt the excitement during the trip. So now they know that they've been to [abroad]. They had the opportunity. Now most of them, it's just the human behavior, they cannot stand working again without having the trip one more

time or something like that. And then it's just in their minds, they're just going to have motivation to strive for that trip again, for the trip abroad.

Of course, I have to find the point where they actually feeling excited for the trip, for the abroad opportunity. Otherwise it just gonna cost money. Those result actually needs like hours of research for that. We [company] really have to like give a bit of investment into the [employee] performance.

00:15:01 Bekzat

Nice. Do you have any other ways of investing into your employees rather than going abroad? For example, more local things or anything else?

00:15:14 Manager 1

So now we've talked about the growth of opportunity of employees. We also provide parties and transportation support for the family members in case that they are not able to afford those [transportation fees] at the moment.

For example, one of the cases that we had is one of the employees that really good at the performance and … the problem that he had is that the flat, the rental place of him is too far away from the factories [company]. So, we also provide support an amount of fee for them [employee and his family] to actually moving from the far place to the place where it is close to the factory. Of course we have to pay a bit for that, but I saw the performance that actually gained back the amount that we've spent. So I would say that was a successful.

00:16:26 Bekzat

How do you measure performance of your employees?

00:16:31 Manager 1

I usually manage it by key performance indicator of course. I take the input by using the level of satisfactions of customers and the amount of products was export during the period of time.

00:00:00 Bekzat

Thank you. So here's our last question. Do you provide feedback for your employees that helps them to grow professionally and personally?

00:00:10 Manager 1

Yeah, of course. So along with giving opportunity for them to grow, I think it's also a need to provide them feedback that helps them grow professionally and personally. Like I said, every employees want to. Help himself so from all the data that we collect from the level of satisfactions of customers, and also not only customers, but also the employees, we collect them

and then we're gonna analyze the level of happiness. Of employees during the month every month, if it is the same procedures. And then we're gonna have a sessions with them. Where we gonna have a talk. Me personally. So there are two department. One is that they're going to give the feedback based on the emotions, the working performance and, for example, me, I'm going to give a feedback based on the products that they did. And they have two sides. One side they want to grow personally. Outside of their individual life or so. Things like that. And the other side is that they want to, if they want to grow in terms of the industry that they are doing at the moment, which is and providing them feedback that they can also take the perspective from both sides because. For me, I think if you take just one perspective. Because I'm able to give feedback to judge based on, of course, the product itself, but not on the emotional side. And for any employees that I want, I think that they want to be, they want to get the clearly feedback based on the what they did and then what they feel separately.

00:02:12 Bekzat

Do you have an example when such feedback increases performance of an employee?

00:02:20 Manager 1

This is like one of the pretty tough feedback that we got, which is there's this employees that has a pretty good performance, but the performance the rings like 2:00 to 3:00 next months going down slope because of family problems. And obviously from my perspective, I see that product is going down. So I gave a feedback. But on the other side of emotional support. Let's say the emotional support department. They saw, they disagree with I'm feedbacking. Dual to that, we know that there are just going to be intersections during that. For example, one is going up slow but and one is going down slow. So we know that we cannot solve it by just giving always one solution, because it's a different thing. So what we also did is that we tried to, for example, I gave him this thing, that he was able to decrease the work for two months. Exchange of land. The order Department, they will help the employees to increase the family's happiness life. And after those two months, the amount of work you will get back into normal and the result is that we had a significantly different in work performance after just two months. And I think that if it wasn't for that, it's going to be really hard for him to get back into the previous performance because if the amount of work stays the same when any employees, they don't have the time for both work and families, and it's just going to keep. You know, going in. On that slope then, I think there has to be like sacrifice something. He sacrificed a bit of work to increase the level of families happiness. And yeah, that sacrifice did a great job.

00:04:45 Bekzat

Great. Amazing. If it's not too private, could you share how did you help with your employee to your employees family during that tough time?

00:04:55 Manager 1

So mainly the employees, families problems was that he did not spend time enough to talk the to talk their children and also because of the mothers. She [mother] also had to, you know, work

around a lot. So they both [parents] didn't have so much time for the insurance, not to mention home educations. So what we did is that we provide - we provide for two months free home educations, which is from a like home teacher that we know. And we did not provide it for free. It was a term that we actually take it from 25% of the salaries or the bonus depends on what the employee choose, and then we're going to use that money. And then we put like more let's say 30 to 40% from the companies budget to provide the home teacher educations for the children of the employees. And of course, we also have some, I would say that like mentally support for both of the parents … that how should mentor actually work in these situations, what would be better for the children and stuff. Because all of the employees at our place are Vietnamese. And a lot of them not to say like most of them, don't speak Czech.

Then that's why they have most of the problems. But that is a traditional for us [Vietnamese culture]. Because like when the Vietnamese [employee] work in the Vietnamese environment, they actually motivate each other. They have this kind of like motivations where they just keep working and they are really connected to each other. That's why we don't usually worry about the work performance inside the factory, but we usually care about the outside life more than inside [workspace]. And yeah, so maybe one day that it's going to affect our budget that we've been investing too much for the workers, but for me, I think that days still going to be far and for me, I always think that the employee should be able to have a look, have a perspective to the employer or the manager as their actual friends, not as a family person. But as a friend where they can actually talk where they can actually share. And it's also a good thing that we are able to. We are as a manager, are able to respect their perspective. And you know, listen to them.

That's what all

00:07:55 Bekzat

That's great. Thank you for the interview. That was really great. Amazing.

(additional)
Bekzat
Could you just tell us more about your company?

00:08:05 Manager 1

So we are a furniture company where we provide the every furniture product for any kind of salon, which is like nail salon or hair salon or spa or anything like that in check in Germany.

Poland, Austria, or just technically around Europe.

And yeah, and for exclusively for Vietnamese because they are really like little amount of factories like I don't think there's none so far the factories of Vietnamese.

Except check factories and The thing is that check factories, they are rarely produced separately, which is like single products for any kind of buyers. They usually product produce the big amount of products and then they sell it into the retail store which is like getting more which is it gets more expensive.

And Vietnamese always.

Like the customized products which are the products that you know, it's customized as what they want and then we gather all their opinions, their perspective and then you know we.

We, like we produce any kind of furnitures based on their orders, which kind of thing they like. They like marbles.

They like this kind of word, that kind of word, and then we would import the stuff from, like also around Europe. There are some stuff that we imported from Austria, some of them we import from Poland.

And then we just give them the best price. And since they are more and more Vietnamese as we know that they're a very big Vietnamese community in Czech Republic. So more and more Vietnamese coming here that they are opening those kind of salon which are the easiest thing to do as an adult.

With the family, so of course they don't know how to speak check, so usually they find our place or the 1st place to go to a store.

And from that we just create those kind of connections relationships from that and then we just you know spread it.

Around to the public.

00:10:23 Bekzat

Great. Yeah. Thank you. Thanks for the interview.

Interview Employee 5

Age: 28

Gender: Male

Education level: Double postgraduate.

job position: Project manager.

Duration: 7 years, 3 months.

00:01:09 Bekzat

So, did your leader provide you with any opportunities for learning and development at your workplace?

00:01:16 Employee 5

Absolutely. He encouraged it, not just provided he encouraged . He guided and mentored us to go deep into the topics and enabled us, OK. These are the important skills that you should have that you should learn and always made us ask the question.

'Why do you need somebody else's help? Why can't you do it?' You know he would emphasize on it. Like, 'OK, you do a Google search, and you find out. And can you do it? You don't need a separate engineer to do this role.' And he would help us learn a lot, but he would also be very supportive.

I would give an example of he would be very supportive. Like for example I wanted to start we were filling timecards, and it was a very painful process to select each file, copy paste it, make a copy, change the name, change the date, change everything and then. Do it week after week after week. It was very annoying, so I wanted to automate [process] So I just took my time, started learning by myself and doing it on my own. He knew I was working on something he never asked me, never said anything. He [leader] said. 'If you need any help you let me know' and I went ahead. I showed him the system. He said, 'OK, this is good. Make these changes. This is good.' and we deployed it [new system] all over the company. A free tool we just built in house.
If I wanted to learn something which is not part of what we are offering to our clients, it is not part of sales or business still he [leader] would be very encouraging like 'OK, learn this automation, learn if you're learning this, go for it.' So, he was supportive in that way.

00:03:17 Bekzat

What specific actions or behaviors for your leader contribute to a positive work environment?

00:03:29 Employee 5

So I had two leaders, OK.

So I'll talk about the first one, the most supportive or most encouraging action was he would always be very humble.

Both of them were extremely humble and it's just unbelievable thing to see people at their level with 25 years of experience, which is like our CEO when we would go to us for client visits, we would all go to different clients. Four of us and come back to the company.

And our CEO [first leader] was living in the same city, but not with us, but he would come to our company guest house and make dinner for all of us and buy fruits and everything. And just make sure we have everything to feel like a home, like a family. And it was very like 'you guys go work for me and you come back. I work for you.' And he would cook. Literally, dinner for all of us, you know, and not once. Just regularly. He would. OK, we wanted to have juice. Next day he just gets a juicer. He just buys the juicer and the fruits and everything. And we'll have fresh juice every day now. So he was very kind in that way, very humble.

The other one [second leader] really enforced our belief in HRTCI is what we call humility, respect, trust, and continuous improvement, so that was the main approach of his towards everything. And that the positive environment was created just because how he would always be calm and patient. And humble. But he would have a very valid point. Right. He is very disciplined, very senior level guy. But like, we would have a joke like, you know, 'he's so particular and perfect like, you know one point later'. If you ask him a question. He'll have a big Excel sheet with all the 150 people under him with all their names and what he's discussed with who, which one and that's the kind of guy. So, he was coming with the high experience but being at our level, which was really encouraging.

00:05:52 Bekzat

Can you tell [me] more about discipline. Did he was demanding on you about it [discipline] or how was it?

00:06:02 Employee 5

He was demanding about the discipline, but for me there was little [demand for discipline] I would say for me and people who were like the early joiners in the company. For us, the rules were slightly different because there have been times like we've been in the office till 6:00 AM and we closed the office with the like 10 of us, all had our own keys. And the staff and other people did [have keys] too.

There would be discipline, but for some people. It was just wave. Like nobody would question because we know we would get the work done. So I would go to my office at 4:00 PM, but then I would leave at 12-1[am] wherever or I would leave at 8:00 [am] and then I will log in again at 12 or 1 [pm]. Because my clients are in America. So my timing has to be supporting them as well.

Right. So as long as he knew we were ready to willing to put in the work and, you know, give the output he was OK with being lenient with discipline. But of course there was discipline in other factors which I think is one of your other questions. So I'll let you continue and then I'll explain afterwards.

00:07:16 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question. Apart from job contractor work, so basically salary or like yeah, what other form of motivation do you receive from your leader? Do you have some specific example?

00:07:34 Employee 5

A lot of them there are. Firstly, it was a great learning opportunities you could learn and grow as much as you want. The limit was you and they always emphasis.

You need to send a pull request and not expect to push request from the management. Management will not push you to do more. You need to pull. I want to do more and if you want you could do it. You could learn it and that was a good motivation. The other thing was we were being heard till a certain point after things changed [in the company] but we were being heard in terms of active discussion, active opportunities, events, things to do. Like for example, I took initiative for a lot of different projects internally. One of them was having a weekly meeting with the new joiners [new employees] to get their feedback and then take it to the management. And the other was: I started the magazine, an internal circulation magazine about the most interesting use case for this week. 'What was the problem statement? How did we solve it? What are other things that are happening?' [contents of the magazine] And then the magazine grew into a big team later. It was just me doing it with the help of a friend. And then it was a team of four or five people getting magazine, getting poems from people who are writers and all sorts of like, a school magazine, you. Know and it also for a while. So these are the things that were just, you know, good things that you don't experience in a big corporate.

That's one thing the other thing is apart from the monetary motivation that we got was - our boss, our company CEO. [He] was very humble and very giving, grateful person right. If you're travelling with him, he would just maybe, you know, buy you something, buy for you something from the airport or upgrade to business class or he once took like a team of 40 people like the core team members flew us all to Dubai and we did a company off site in Dubai in Marriott. And then it was a great event. And then we did a sightseeing. We hire so, he [CEO] is all about making it [company] a family, a culture, and he's willing to spend money for this particular reason [culture].

00:10:08 Bekzat

And you said they always hear you. So what are your needs at your job?

00:10:22 Employee 5

Well, there are two different things, but the needs that were fulfilled was let's say you know you need a better computer. Boom! OK, [CEO] ordered computers from US. 'It will take some time. You'll get there' 'OK. The computation power is still not good. OK, we set up a server high performing great server, small tiny one. And everybody gets a remote login. You book it on the calendar and you use it for heavy calculations. OK.' [comments of CEO in brackets]

So they were, they were listening and solving our problems 1 by 1. Like earlier we had a small office. Then we replaced the chairs. The chairs were not good. We told them, yeah, it's getting really hot. They rented another office. Just one floor above until the main office is being built. … some of the needs they were listening at least till a certain point. And then when it [company] grew big enough for the HR and the admin team to handle [employee needs] But the point I was talking about was not like the needs being fulfilled, but just the fact of you being heard your inputs being heard by the management, by the company. You know that's a work satisfaction.

If I go in a big company like PwC or EY and I see something, it will take me years to get the ear of somebody who can do something. But I need to tell my supervisor, supervisor tells to junior manager, junior manager will tell to his director, director will tell to senior partner. You know, it's a big chain.

But the work satisfaction we felt there [in company] was that, yeah, you could freely interact and talk to them [CEO and board of directors] and they would listen to you. Maybe there may or may not be action, it may not be fulfilled. But at least you were being heard. If I wanted to start a new initiative. Yeah, they would hear me out. That that was good.

00:12:27 Bekzat

That's great. So as I understand you well in your organization and you want to contribute more and more.

Bekzat:

The next question about the feedback of your leader: how did you receive your feedback from your leader?

00:00:19 Employee 5

Like I said, he was just an absolutely great leader, not a manager, but just a great leader. He just knew what he was doing. His feedback was on the point specific and constructive, even the criticism was constructive. There are times which, like now looking back, I know that there are times where I may have pulled the string too hard and sometimes I would say: yeah, OK, you know, I worked 18 hours last two days. I'm just going to relax then. He understood it sometimes, but sometimes, even though it didn't matter, like there was no work, but he would make sure, like, you know you, you should be able to inform in advance a little bit. And it was just a whole different way that he was giving the feedback. Yeah, he would give, like, proper goals, which are at your capability at your level, like which you would strive to do.

00:01:22 Bekzat

The last question: What specific qualities or behavior do you admire in your leader as a role?

00:01:33 Employee 5

Well, I told you [leader is] very humble and humility. Respect and trust, always listening to being open to communication very important. With specific qualities: being calm and patient is probably also a key because not everybody ss the same. Right. And so everybody is different, but

it doesn't mean that nobody is irreplaceable. Everybody is also replaceable, but they are all different. So you need to see whose talent and strength is where and give it to them. What I admired about this person was his collaboration. Just focus on collaboration that just sunk into me. I still carry it with me. Like everything, he would just make sure. How can you scale it? You did a difficult project. You did it. OK. Client appreciates great stuff and then. We say: OK, let's make a presentation about the learnings from this and share it with everyone.

And then we started doing this for all the projects and sharing the learnings. And then when we have to pitch for a new customer, we show them like these are all the projects field. This is how our team works and we have a great knowledge base. We have a better knowledge base than the product company themselves.

Like so I'll tell you brief about my the company.

We were implementing the software. We were not making it. There was another company who was building it. We were just partners to help you [the company] implement it to the client. So we were like translators. 'They have this requirement. You have this tool. How do I set up this tool to get it right?' So we didn't make anything but. At some point when they were lost. When the tool was pretty new our team was so hardcore into testing. We were finding bugs left and right and we were just reporting it to them every week with five new bugs. And they're like: 'your team does a better job at QA quality assurance than my team.' So they [partners] hired us to do a quality assurance for their product.

We asked this company Rajguru is still their biggest partner in terms of this and it's understood that we have or this company has a better knowledge base for supporting clients just in terms of number of people and number of projects that we have done, nobody has done so much. So even better than themselves. So they [partners] want to hire a consultant, they don't hire their consultant. They hire our consultant first.

So what was the question again? What qualities?
…

[Qualities] are collaboration and learning, sharing the learnings, focusing on it and making sure everybody benefits from one experience when you share you multiple. If I try to learn four things, it will take me, let's say 4 minutes. If four of us learn one thing it will take one minute each and then one minute to discuss half. The [total] time 2 minutes and that was what sang with me.

00:04:42 Bekzat

That's great, how would you say it [transformational leadership style] affect your performance?

00:04:56 Employee 5

It kept me motivated and willing to do more because just of the fact that I was able to grow and expand and stretch my legs and arms. And the it's not always a good idea to have all the freedom

to stretch, but if a person is willing. Right, there's a skill will. Skill lacking or is will lacking. This is matrix. You try to put it down so a person may not be skilled, but they might be willing, right. If the person is willing, you give them a little bit Leg space, breathing room and let them occupy that space and grow. And yeah, that's what my experience was with this company.

Although I wanted to mention one more incident, I think you had a question about some specific examples of transformational leadership. I don't know if you still had it or not.

Some specific examples of what was transformational:

So when this guy, I'm talking about my main director, when he joined the company, he joined six months after I did. But he was the 2nd in command, so it was CEO and ten of us just normal analysts, and he knew that the company is going to grow and we need a leader. So he [CEO] negotiated, hired and brought this guy [director], who I've been talking about. So all of us had done like one or two projects. So we were in the middle of the projects he [director] just joined…. like, so [in company] was me and my colleague, we were doing 2 projects actually and he got involved with us. Right. He got involved in every meeting with the client. Every activity that we are doing, everything at the root level. And we didn't realize, we didn't understand what was happening. Like, we had this conversation like: he is a director and this is our job. I I'm not sure why he is, you know, doing this route level work. After some time when the company started growing, it was a sudden move. Nobody could have expected it. Right? And I told my CEO multiple times if it wasn't for this guy [director], this company could not have scaled up, could not have because the fact that he went down to the root level in those two projects into every meeting late night, whatever that was, his way of learning and grasping up the tool and the problems and the situations. And then all of us were struggling with 4-5 projects. He was doing 30 projects and he knew what was happening because he had that experience. He had that vision far, [it] felt that I need to do 2 [projects] at the root level and then put it. Then I can do all of these and that was beautiful.

And the other example that we had. We were all using like you know, if it's ten people in an office room, everybody has their own PC, you have hard disk, you write the files on Excel and then you just pass it around. And because adolescent accountants, we love Excel because of the shortcuts and everything. Like, it's not just like recording information on a Google sheet. We need to actually calculate and put formulas and do a lot of actions on it. So you're all doing it on Excel. We're all used to it. This guy [director] came and said we are all switching to Google. And of course, there was some initial resistance, but he said there's nothing that works better in collaboration like Google. 'Everything you can do in Excel, you can do it in Google. There's nothing that you cannot do. You can even do more.' And we were like: 'yeah, but it's not difficult. You can't use all the shortcuts.' You know, we memorize the shortcuts. We are accountants and analysts. We know what to do. And So, what everybody was doing was using on Excel and then uploading it on Google and that was actually stupid thing you do. You just do it on Google directly, because then every time you're working offline and then he explained the reason - the requirement. Collaboration and time zone will change, right? We need to have the important files available at every time and if somebody has signed off from work, I don't want to call anybody after work. I just don't want to. But if there is a file that is sitting on their computer that they [US colleagues] forgot to send, then I will have to call them even if they are on vacation and ask them to do it. And to avoid [such] situation, just do it straight up here and it took some

time. It had to be pushed a lot to people. I picked it up fast and I was helping him push to other people to my team. But I see the value in it. I see the huge value in it because when I had my own team of 10 people. I realized what he was planning to do and why he had to start 1st. So yeah, these were the 2 examples I think.

00:09:43 Bekzat

I really like your example. Thank you.

Interview with Manager 2

Age: 37

Gender: Female

Education level: undergraduate

Job Position: general manager of two hotels.

Duration: 5 years

00:01:09 Bekzat

The first question, do you encourage teamwork and the sense of belonging among your team members?

00:01:33 Manager 2

Yes, of course I do. I have to encourage them a lot, I think I'm working with the other generation than me like most of my team. They are students, university students so they are young people between. 20-26 years old and I think this generation, you need to encourage a lot. So that's why I do. I do my best to always motivate them, to improve themselves. Hospitality is like customer service, and they have to be willing to deal with people. So there is I can say that it is not easy. It is not for everybody to do this kind of job because some people like to be just with the computer and don't see anyone but. Who is doing customer service have to be willing to give the best to the, to the, to the people. So, I have to encourage some time them because they could be quite introvert sometimes. Yeah, I can say.

00:02:50 Bekzat

Thank you. Can you give an example? How do you encourage them?

00:02:56 Manager 2

… I think I encourage them a lot of with the education fields I have people that they when young people start to get money, they forget about other. It's. And I think it's very important to be educated, to go to, to university, to study, to become something. And this is what I always do. I always like, encourage them to get better in their life. To offer also always a good job. No, no, matter how old they are or what they are doing. I encourage them always to do their best to, to offer a quality job. This is something that is, I can say this is. My. Standard that I always like. The money I can say on the end that. If you want to be successful in life, you have to always offer the best you have to your job, to your school, or whatever, whatever thing you do. Always you have to do your best to offer your best. For that, yeah.

00:04:07 Bekzat

Thank you. Do they have an access for some learning platforms or how do you encourage for self-development?

00:04:15 Manager 2

Well, we have in the company training in order to improve the skill. So actually we have language courses. We have also software about what we are doing if someone want to improve in this field. It's amazing how the company can prepare you to do any kind of job related with the hospitality and also with a little bit part of administration as well. So I think it's like very good opportunity that they can find with us as well, yeah.

00:04:55 Bekzat

Thank you. Do you have some activities that foster engagement level among your employees?

00:05:18 Manager 2

Like, do you mean activities some team buildings or something like that? Yes, we actually do. We try not only doing job like the typical commitment job. We always try also to care about their free time and to have time together [teambuilding]. This is really healthy for the team when you can also use some time to recreation. Like in another mode for us, so we definitely will do it, yeah.

00:06:04 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question, do you host training programs, mentorship opportunities or initiatives that implement to help your team member to be better in their role?

00:06:17 Manager 2

Yes, we do. We have internship, actually we have hotels in other countries and also there is opportunity [that] they can travel there. It's like completely different because it's in other continent, but people like it and they had the opportunity to improve their knowledge and also to help the others [employees] in that place [foreign hotels]. So yeah, there is a good option also to do some internship outside. And also cross training in other hotels in other position as well.

00:06:55 Bekzat

Thank you. Does it affect their performance after they go this programs let's say?

00:07:04 Manager 2

I don't think so. I think they improve actually a lot. Actually this is also kind of a motivation for them because to apply to this kind of internship, you [employee] have to be a little bit advanced in some things. So we prepare you [employees] to compete to in order to achieve it [internship]... Because we had a properties in Africa. So if you see Europe and Africa, we [hotels] are completely different. And when we send people [from Europe] to Africa is because they are fully trained to prepare others [employees] there [in Africa]. So they have the opportunity to teach someone there to be better, to offer a better job and with better quality because you know. It's not the same category... We prepare the person [employee] here so they are ready. They are ready to go there and then they can offer the service. They can offer the teaching or the training to the other colleagues in other country that are less developed. So this is a really good thing I think.

00:08:19 Bekzat

Thank you. Next question, do you prioritize creating a positive work environment for your team?

00:08:28 Manager 2

Of course, this is number one. I always try to have a healthy atmosphere in every property. This is this is something essential for me and also for the staff.

00:08:46 Bekzat

Thank you. Amazing. Can you give an example how do you create a positive work environment?

00:08:55 Manager 2

Well. I think I can say they [hotels] have good people. It's like I always try to solve the problem, talking with them [employees] they approach to me and they say ' OK, I don't like what she does or what she's doing to me or what he's doing to me.' So I try to see both [perspectives] of them [employees]. I can talk first separately, [to] see what happened and then I can try to fix the problem. Because you know we are humans and when you have team members and you have at least five people that you have to deal every day. So it is complicated to not have argument... we are rational people. So we can talk, fix our difference. The key is how to approach to the person and fix the situation.

And then there is someone who is creating biggest problems. What I always do is - I give chance. I never say like 'OK, I would fire you because you did something wrong' immediately. So, I follow you [employees]. If I see there is something that we need to improve I have a meeting with you [employee] and I say 'OK, I will follow you this time for a month and I will see how you develop. I need you to change this behavior and in order to be more of team member. So, if you don't develop, so then it will be other decision.' We [company] will go to a decision that probably I don't want and he [employee] doesn't want.

But yeah, I always give second chance and an opportunity to do a step back and do the things different. So I think this is also something good that I can say that is working to me. When I go to approach to the person [employee] and say like 'OK so you are creating some issues here in the team. I need you to change this. So tell me what is happening.' I try to understand the person... Then I can make a decision if I have to find a new one [employee] or I have to change person. It's happened to me sometimes and I think it's successful. Because they [employees] change their behavior and everything start to be OK between the staff. You can find some people complicated. Yeah.

00:12:08 Bekzat

Thank you amazing. After such communication. Let's say does performance of employees increase somehow or affect somehow?

00:12:20 Manager 2

Well, actually increase. I remember in all the time there only one time it wasn't that success, but If I have to evaluate, I think that I have more success with the people changing the behavior, then continue with the same [behavior]...

00:12:47 Bekzat

Can you tell me more about the feedback for employees? How does it deliver?

00:13:06 Manager 2

So actually we had something that we call 'one to one' [meeting]. That we try to do every month with the staff. And we talked to them and I always evaluate all the time what they are and once a month I meet about 15-10 minutes with everyone [employees]. And I talk about the weaknesses, I talk about what we have to improve and in this part I try to give them [employees] the feedback: 'OK, so you are doing this good and this part is not that good. So we can improve here and like this,' I can manage the feedback with them. So this is something that I care a lot because we deal with money, we deal with the system, with the software. So sometimes they make some mistakes and repeatedly and they do it again and again. So I always trying to [say]: 'OK you are doing this... you have been working here for six months' for example and 'you're still doing this [with] little mistake that you should avoid because now you are of like expert. I am expecting more...'. I can say that I give the feedback with this 'one to one' meetings.

00:14:31 Bekzat

Thank you. Amazing next question, aside from traditional rewards like money, do you employ other motivational strategies to inspire and motivate your team members?

00:14:45 Manager 2

Yeah, actually. We offer bonus to them [employees] according to the performance and every month we have different categories [of evaluation]. I evaluate them according to their job. One thing that I always do is I try to give them some project and if they [employees] fulfill the project correctly, they are getting some rewards... Apart, they [employees] have other categories [of

evaluation], [which] could be: customer service feedback because we receive reviews from different agencies. Also, in Google reviews we have different categories that we of course recognize. For them [employees] this reward like [similar to] monetary.

00:15:38 Bekzat

Thank you. Would you say this additional motivation affect to their performance?

00:15:45 Manager 2

The additional motivation? Yes. Of course everybody wants more money, they are young people. I'm talking about young people because I don't have [employees] older than 30 years old… They actually like it [money]. They are sometimes very attentive with details. I give them the opportunity to create ideas. I always say like: 'If you had some ideas to improve something here, just push to me, let me know and I recognize them with the bonus' and they develop very well when they have this kind of motivation of course.

00:16:30 Bekzat

Thank you. The last question. Do you provide the feedback for your employees that helps them to grow professionally or personally?

00:16:42 Manager 2

This is part of 'one to one' I mention you. I always recognize them: 'OK, you are doing amazing job. I like how you are developing in this field, in this area.' I think I always like trying to make them feel like 'OK, we are getting better' and because you know people need changes. You cannot be in the same in the same thing for long time not be bored… to mention you we have levels [in the company] and we start from level A to level B so according to these categories we prepare the person. So we give some tasks in the beginning. Then I see how they develop. 'OK. I think you are ready to jump the level B. So, I give them more responsibility and like this. Until they [employees] get completely senior… Until employee start to be some advanced or senior [level]. We have these categories that improved them, motivate them to get there to be better. Of course the levels is together with the monetary recognition, is start to be from one level to another. So, they [company] increase a little bit the salary as well. So this is a good thing and motivation for them [employees].